

# GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Retired Georgia DOT Employee Receives Garden Club of Georgia Regional Award**

ATLANTA—Georgia Department of Transportation Commissioner Vance C. Smith, Jr. proudly announced that Johnny Westmoreland of White County is the regional winner for Northeast Georgia of the Garden Club of Georgia's annual competition.

Mr. Westmoreland was honored for his spectacular display of wildflowers throughout Hall County. A committed employee, Johnny just retired from the Department with over 34 years of service.

"Johnny was our wildflower professional. He has won our regional award for the last five consecutive years. You can enjoy his work as your drive throughout Northeast Georgia. Johnny was Northeast Georgia's roadside maintenance foreman when he retired in July. We miss working with him every day and hope he is enjoying his retirement," said District Engineer, Russell McMurry. "He is a true representative of all the hardworking men and women of the Department and enrich Georgia every day."

Since 1974, GDOT has partnered with the Garden Club of Georgia in providing resources to plant more than 1,500 acres of wildflowers throughout the state, from the mountains to the coast to the windblown plains.

In support of the program, the club annually presents awards to Georgia DOT employees in recognition of their outstanding efforts in the Wildflower Program. Department managers tour each district in the spring, accompanied by the District Maintenance Foreman. A panel of Club judges then selects winners from each region, and from that group, a statewide winner.

Among the resources to support roadside enhancement, Georgia has introduced two wildflower vehicle tags – the Black-eye Susan and the Purple Coneflower. Combined sales have generated more than \$3.7 million since 1999 for the wildflower program.

Both district and statewide winners receive cash awards through an endowment from Cason and Nancy Callaway known as the Virginia Hand Callaway Awards, named for the person who pioneered the wildflower program.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is committed to providing a safe, seamless and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia's economy and is sensitive to both its citizens and its environment. For general information on the Georgia DOT, please visit our Website ([www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov)).

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